

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 0742

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, CH

SUBJ: PRC WARNINGS ABOUT DANGER OF WAR

REF: A. STATE 28676 B. USNATO 487

1. AT FEB 11 POLADS, U.S. REP (LEDOGAR) CIRCULATED DEPARTMENT'S ANALYSIS CONTAINED REFTEL. UK REP CIRCULATED FOLLOWING TEXT, WHICH ALSO ADDRESSES RECENT STATEMENTS BY POPE PAUL VI EXPRESSING APPREHENSION OVER POSSIBILITY OF WAR (REF B).

BEGIN TEXT

THE CHINESE VIEW

1. CHINESE WARNINGS OF DANGER OF WAR BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE WEST BEGAN TO APPEAR IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1974. WESTERN VISITORS WERE WARNED THAT THREE-QUARTERS OF THE SOVIET MILITARY STRENGTH WAS ON THE WEST FLANK; THAT FORCES ON THE EAST FLANK WERE DIRECTED PRIMARILY AGAINST THE US AND JAPAN; AND THAT THERE WAS A DANGER OF WAR, PARTICULARLY CONVENTIONAL WAR, IN EUROPE. IN HIS SPEECH TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY LAST OCT. CH'IAO KUAN-HUA, QUOTING MAO, SPOKE OF THE DANGERS OF A NEW WORLD WAR. AT THE NATIONAL PEOPLES' CONGRESS ON 13 JAN., CHOU EN LAI CLAIMED THAT "OVER FIERCER CONTENTION BETWEEN THE SUPER POWERS, WITH ITS FOCUS CONFIDENTIAL

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ON EUROPE, WAS BOUND TO LEAD TO WORLD WAR SOME DAY (UNLESS REVOLUTION INTERVENED)". CHOU WENT ON TO STATE THAT "WE SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO GET UNITED."

THE VATICAN VIEW

2. AT A RECEPTION FOR THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS ON 11 JAN. POPE PAUL SPOKE OF "THE BALANCE OF TERROR IN EUROPE". HE SAID THAT WHILE THIS BALANCE PROVIDED SOME MEASURE OF SECURITY IN THE SHORT TERM, IT WAS FRAUGHT WITH DANGER FOR HUMANITY IN THE LONG RUN.

ASSESSMENT

3. THE SIMILARITY OF VATICAN AND CHINESE VIEWS IS COINCIDENTIAL. ELEMENTS IN THE CHANGE OF CHINESE VIEWS IN 1974 PROBABLY INCLUDE:

(A) A WISH TO DENIGRATE THE SOVIET THESIS ON DETENTE IN EUROPE.

B) REALISATION THAT STRESS ON THE THREAT TO CHINA ALONE COULD NOT MOVE THE EUROPEANS TO LOOK TO THEIR DEFENCES.

C) A RE-APPRAISAL BY THE CHINESE OF THEIR OWN DEFENCE CAPACITY AND/OR SOVIET INTENTIONS TOWARDS THEM.

4. THERE IS NO REASON TO SUPPOSE THAT THE CHINESE HAVE ANY FORE-KNOWLEDGE OF SOVIET INTENTIONS. THEIR OPINION IS ROOTED IN IDEOLOGY AND EXPRESSES AN OBVIOUS NATIONAL INTEREST. DETENTE BETWEEN THE SUPERPOWERS, MORE PARTICULARLY A RELEASE OF TENSION ON THE WEST FLANK OF THE SOVIET UNION, IS PREJUDICIAL TO CHINA'S FREEDOM OF MANOEUVRE.
END TEXT.

2. ITALIAN REP (FERRETTI) AGREED WITH BRITISH VIEW THAT WARNINGS FROM BOTH PEKING AND THE VATICAN ABOUT THE DANGER OF WAR WERE COINCIDENTIAL.

3. FRENCH REP, WHOSE AMBASSADOR HAD ORIGINALLY SUGGESTED THAT ALLIES ASSESS MOTIVES BEHIND THE CHINESE WARNINGS ABOUT THE DANGER OF WAR (REF B), SAID THERE WAS NO NEED TO MENTION THE POPE'S WARNINGS IN PAPER POLADS WERE PREPARING. UK REP (MARGETSON) SUGGESTED THAT POLADS' PAPER MIGHT HAVE COVERING NOTE SAYING THAT POLADS HAD STUDIED THE POPE'S STATE-CONFIDENTIAL

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MENTS AND CONCLUDED THAT THEY WERE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT IN NATURE FROM THOSE OF THE CHINESE.

4. U.S. REP EXPRESSED HOPE THAT PAPER WOULD BE SUCCINCT AND THAT POLADS WOULD BE ABLE TO FORWARD IT PROMPTLY TO THE COUNCIL.
BRUCE

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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